

IN THE CLAIMS

1-26 (Cancelled).

27 (Currently Amended). A power semiconductor device made in accordance with the method of ~~claim 1~~ comprising the steps of:

- A. providing a substrate of a first conductivity type;
- B. forming a voltage sustaining region on said substrate by:
 - 1. depositing an epitaxial layer on the substrate, said epitaxial layer having a first or a second conductivity type;
 - 2. forming at least one terraced trench in said epitaxial layer, said terraced trench having a trench bottom and a plurality of portions that differ in width to define at least one annular ledge therebetween;
 - 3. depositing a barrier material along the walls and bottom of said trench;
 - 4. implanting a dopant of a conductivity type opposite to the conductivity type of the epitaxial layer through the barrier material lining at said at least one annular ledge and at said trench bottom and into adjacent portions of the epitaxial layer to respectively form at least one annular doped region and another doped region;
 - 5. diffusing the dopant in said at least one annular doped region and said another doped region to cause said at least one annular doped region and said another doped region to overlap one another, whereby a continuous doped column is formed in said epitaxial layer;
 - 6. depositing a filler material in said terraced trench to substantially fill said terraced trench; and
- C. forming over said voltage sustaining region at least one region of conductivity type opposite to the conductivity type of the epitaxial layer to define a junction therebetween.

28 (Currently Amended). A power semiconductor device made in accordance with the method of claim-7 27,

wherein said plurality of portions of the terraced trench are coaxially located with respect to one another, and

wherein said plurality of portions of the terraced trench includes at least three portions that differ in width from one another to define at least two annular ledges and said at least one annular doped region includes at least two annular doped regions, and

wherein the step of forming at least one terraced trench includes the steps of successively etching said at least three portions of the terraced trench beginning with a largest width portion and ending with a smallest width portion.

29 (Currently Amended). A power semiconductor device made in accordance with the method of claim [[9]] 27,

wherein step (C) further includes the steps of:

forming a gate conductor above a gate dielectric region;

forming first and second body regions in the epitaxial layer to define a drift region therebetween, said body regions having a conductivity type opposite to the conductivity type of the epitaxial layer; and

forming first and second source regions of the first conductivity type in the first and second body regions, respectively.

30 (Original). A power semiconductor device comprising:

- a substrate of a first conductivity type;
- a voltage sustaining region disposed on said substrate, said voltage sustaining region including:
 - an epitaxial layer having a first or second conductivity type;
 - at least one terraced trench located in said epitaxial layer, said terraced trench having a trench bottom and a plurality of portions that differ in width to define at least one annular ledge therebetween;
 - at least one doped column having a dopant of a conductivity type opposite to the conductivity type of the epitaxial layer, said doped column being formed from at least one annular doped region and another doped region diffused into one another, said at least one annular region and said another doped region being located in said epitaxial layer adjacent to and below said at least one annular ledge and said trench bottom, respectively;
 - a filler material substantially filling said terraced trench; and
 - at least one active region of a conductivity opposite to the conductivity type of the epitaxial layer disposed over said voltage sustaining region to define a junction therebetween.

31 (Original). The device of claim 30 wherein said plurality of portions of the terraced trench includes a smallest width portion and a largest width portion, said smallest width portion being located at a depth in said epitaxial layer such that it is closer to the substrate than a largest width portion.

32 (Original). The device of claim 31 wherein said plurality of portions of the terraced trench are coaxially located with respect to one another.

33 (Original). The device of claim 30 wherein said plurality of portions of the terraced trench includes at least three portions that differ in width from one another to define at least two annular ledges and said at least one annular doped region includes at least two annular doped regions.

34 (Original). The device of claim 32 wherein said plurality of portions of the terraced trench includes at least three portions that differ in width from one another to define at least two annular ledges and said at least one annular doped region includes at least two annular doped regions.

35 (Original). The device of claim 30 wherein said epitaxial layer has a given thickness and further comprising the step of etching a first portion of the terraced trench by an amount substantially equal to $1/(x+1)$ of said given thickness, where x is equal to or greater than a prescribed number of annular doped regions to be formed in the voltage sustaining region.

36 (Original). The device of claim 30 wherein said material filling the trench is a dielectric material.

37 (Original). The device of claim 36 wherein said dielectric material is silicon dioxide.

38 (Original). The device of claim 37 wherein said dielectric material is silicon nitride.

39 (Original). The device of claim 30 wherein said dopant is boron.

40 (Original). The device of claim 34 wherein a surface area of the at least two annular ledges are substantially equal to one another.

41 (Original). The device of claim 30 wherein said at least one active region further includes:

a gate dielectric and a gate conductor disposed above said gate dielectric;
first and second body regions located in the epitaxial layer to define a drift region therebetween, said body regions having a second conductivity type; and
first and second source regions of the first conductivity type located in the first and second body regions, respectively.

42 (Original). The device of claim 41 wherein said body regions include deep body regions.

43 (Original). The device of claim 30 wherein said terraced trench has a circular cross-section.

44 (Original). The device of claim 30 wherein said terraced trench has a cross-sectional shape selected from the group consisting of a square, rectangle, octagon, and a hexagon.